

In With the Old, Out With the New.

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In with the Old, Out with the New

It was a bright, sunny day. Jamie took a quick look in her mirror and headed out the door. She was carrying a beach bag that contained her bathing suit and a towel. She stepped outside and collided with a surfboard with legs. She peered around it. "Turner, are you okay?" she asked, offering her brother a hand.

He took it gratefully. "I'm fine." Turner replied. He picked up his surfboard and inspected it carefully.

"Going surfing, I see." Jamie said with a smile.

Turner nodded. "What else would I be doing?"

"I don't know, detention?" Jamie suggested.

"Nope. We got time off this week." Turner joked.

"Well, It turns out I'm going to the beach myself. Why don't we ask Hayden to come? It'll be a family outing."

"Not including Jeff and Chris right?"

"Maybe next time. You guys have been spending a lot of time with Jeff lately. "

"Definitely _a lot_." Turner agreed. "Let's do it. Hayden seems to need some cheering up lately. He won't mind if I'm there. We've been spending a lot of time together too. He doesn't seem to hate me so much anymore."

"Hayden never hated you. He's just a little resentful."

"I thought that was my job. I am the middle child after all."

"I know. But he's probably jealous. You're the genius in the family. And he used to think that they hadn't wanted him." Jamie reminded him.

"I guess you're right."

Jamie knocked on Hayden's door, and they waited. But he didn't come. Turner knocked again with the same result. They exchanged a puzzled look.

Maybe he isn't in his room." Turner suggested. "His car is here."

"No, I heard him go in there a few minutes ago." Jamie replied.

Just then the door opened. "I'll see you tomorrow." They heard a girl say.

"Okay." Hayden replied. A tall blond girl, who looked a lot like Jamie's best friend Hayley, stepped out. Hayden was close behind. She left, stopping for a moment to say hi to Turner.

Jamie and Turner stared after the girl in disbelief.

"Was that...?" Jamie began.

Hayden nodded. "Yeah, and before you say anything, she was just helping me study."

"Why was Amanda helping you study?" Turner asked, surprised.

"We're still friends." Hayden replied defensively. "I ran into her at the library today."

"What were you doing at a library?" Jamie raised her eyebrow at him.

"I had to study for my Spanish test."

"But in a _library_? I don't think I've ever seen you go to one in my entire life." Turner commented.

"Things change."

"Whatever you say." Jamie replied with a shrug. "Wanna come to the beach with us?"

"Sure." Hayden headed to his car. Turner and Jamie followed, but not without exchanging one last look.

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The next day Amanda came over again. Only this time she had dinner with the whole Loring family. She and Hayden sat in a booth as far away as possible, going over his Spanish notes. Jeff and Chris kept interrupting them to talk to Amanda. Jamie and Turner tried to give them some privacy, but even they couldn't help it sometimes.

Grandma stood up. "Well, I must be off."

"Big date tonight?" Sheriff Loring said with a grin.

"Oh, same old, same old. You know how it is."

"Have fun." The kids called after her.

"I'd better go, too." John said a few minutes later when they were eating dessert.

"Okay, we'll see you later." Jamie said cheerfully. She turned to the two younger boys. "Don't you have homework to do?"

"We're not finished yet." Jeff protested. "And anyway, it's Friday. We have a whole weekend to do it."

"No excuses. And do the dishes, too."

They groaned, but they got up and collected the dishes.

"I have to call Tommy." Jamie said, getting up as well. "Turner, come on."

"Why do I have to go?" Turner replied. "I don't want to hear you talk to him. I'll get sick. "

"Well, just hang out with me for a little while." She grabbed his sleeve and dragged him out the door.

Amanda laughed. "I've missed you're brothers so much."

"Yeah, well, you don't have to live with them." Hayden replied.

"Oh, come on. Your family's great. And Jamie seems pretty nice. So, what's been going on around here?"

Hayden shrugged. "Not much."

"There are so many things I've been wondering about lately about you guys."

"Like what?"

"I don't know, like, does Grandma still say that your grandfather died because they built the freeway?"

Hayden cracked up. "Yep, sure she does."

"Jeff and Chris are still inseparable I see."

"Yeah, you should have seen Jeff when they were supposed to be

separated for ten days. He was driving us nuts."

"Poor thing. Poor you."

"That wasn't the worst of it. Grandma came that week. The other one."

"Oh, no! What bad news did she bring this time?"

"Just that Turner shouldn't stay in the sun and I'm going to be alone for the rest of my life."

Amanda giggled. "Sorry."

"She and Grandma got into a fight. Poor Jamie tried to break them up. It's a good thing Stucky showed up. "

"You mean about...?"

"Uh huh. Turns out it was just a misunderstanding. They had eloped a year before and she didn't know."

"How could she not? That's not exactly easy to keep a secret."

"Hey, I didn't even know."

"I'm glad I wasn't there to see that." Amanda suddenly became quiet. "So," she said finally, "are you seeing anyone."

"No, not presently. You?"

"Me neither. Actually," she confessed, "I haven't dated any since we broke up."

"Why not?"

"The truth is, I didn't really want to break up. It's too complicated to explain. I guess I just thought we needed some time apart. Maybe I was right. You seem to be much more like you used to be before... Anyway, your brothers aren't the only ones I've missed."

"So, what do you mean? You want to get back together?"

"Yes, but only if you want to. If you don't think you can forgive me, I can except that. You don't have to decide right now. I 'd better go. I'll talk to you tomorrow." She headed to the door.

"Wait!" She stopped and turned around. "I want to get back together, too."

"You do?" She threw her arms around him.

"Sure, why not? Now I'm sorry I threw all that stuff away."

Amanda pulled away. "I'd really better go." She gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"Bye." Hayden closed the door behind her and waited until she was out of sight. "Yes!" He shouted. He heard a snicker. He behind the counter and sitting there were Jamie, Turner, Jeff and Chris.

"How long have you guys been there?"

Jeff and Chris giggled. "Long enough." Chris said.

"I'm sorry." Jamie apologized. "We couldn't help ourselves."

Hayden shrugged. "Forget about it. Just keep them quiet, will you? I'm sick of chasing them."

"I don't think so." Turner said with a sly grin.

"Turner?"

"Yes?" He said sweetly.

"Run." Turner took off; Jeff and Chris close behind. But Hayden stayed put.

"Why aren't you going after them?"

"I don't really care. Besides, I want to see how far they'll go before they realize I'm not behind them."

"I think they know." Jamie pointed out the window. Jeff and Chris were standing outside, making funny faces at them.

"Okay, now I'm going after them." He bolted out the door. Jamie followed laughing.

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Hayley (Jamie's best friend and Hayden's ex-girlfriend) slammed down her chemistry book in frustration. "I hate this stuff. It's like reading a foreign language."

Jamie giggled. "It's not that bad."

"Maybe, but I could think of a lot of things I'd rather be doing right now."

"Like what? Going out with Pete?"

"Ugh, no. I'm not going out with him anymore. Like shopping, or going to the movies. Did I mention shopping?"

Jamie rolled her eyes. "Yes you did. But we can't. Not now. We have a test tomorrow."

"We need a break. Please?" Hayley begged.

Jamie sighed. "Fine, let me get my purse. I'll be right back."

A few minutes after she left, Hayden came wandering in. He had a big smile on his face.

"Hey," Hayley said cheerfully. This is going to be even better than shopping. She thought to herself.

"Oh, er hi." Hayden said uncomfortably, his smile now gone.

"Wanna come shopping with us?" She asked.

"I don't think so." Hayden made a face.

"Well, I was thinking. Maybe we could go to a movie next Friday?"

Hayden shook his head. "I don't think so." He repeated.

"Well, how about the beach then? Or dinner? Something."

"I can't," he said, "didn't Jamie tell you?"

"No, she didn't. She hasn't mentioned you. I just thought of this now. How about Saturday then?"

"No! First of all, like I said, I can't. Second, I don't even want to. I'm sick and tired of you dumping me, and then expecting me to go out with you again. Once is one thing, but not, like, four times."

"I haven't..."

"Yes, you have." He interrupted. "And you don't even apologize."

"For what?" Hayley shouted. "I wasn't the one who screwed it up."

"Well, then I'm glad I did. I don't know why I ever went out with you. Maybe because Turner was right and you do look almost exactly like Amanda. But you know the difference between you two?"

"I had the sense not to go out with you for eight years?"

"No, the difference is, she actually cares about me. And the reason I can't go out with you, not to mention don't want to, is because I'd rather, and will be, with her."

"Well, then I hope you two are very happy together." Hayley said coldly. "And I'm never getting back together with you. Not a chance."

"Good. That's fine with me."

Hayley walked out, slamming the door behind her. Then Jamie came in.

"What's going on?" She asked, puzzled.

"We broke up for the last time." He replied.

"Oh, you okay?"

Hayden nodded. "Better than okay. But I'm sorry if this effects your friendship with her."

Jamie shrugged. "It'll be okay. Besides, you guys are more important to me anyway. Friends are good to have, but you'll always need a

loving family. At least in my opinion."

Hayden smiled a little. "Yeah, I guess that's what we are. Family."

Jamie smiled back. She liked that.

The End.

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